

# PROFILE 2005 A LETTER FROM HOME



THE MERIDIAN STAR COMMUNITY THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2005

## Frozen



**FIVE GUYS "BACHING IT"**

PHOTO BY PAULA MERRITT / THE MERIDIAN STAR

Damen Regan, center, plays with his four stepsons on a slide at Maranatha Fellowship Church near Naval Air Station Meridian. In front of him are John Tyler and Andrew Paul; Anthony and Mychale are behind him. Mom Ginger Regan, a sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserve, has been deployed to Kosovo — and may not return until 2006. Until then, it's a self-sufficient bachelors' life for Damen and the boys.

## Key Field: Home of the Army's 185th, 150th

**By Steve Gillespie**  
staff writer

Key Field in Meridian is home to Company G of the 185th Aviation Group and the 150th Combat Engineer Battalion of the Mississippi Army National Guard.

The mission of the 185th's Company G is to move troops and cargo, lift heavy equipment and recover damaged aircraft.

Army Aviation was first organized in Mississippi in 1948 to support artillery units. The aviation units were located at Grenada Airport. In January 1951, all Army aviation units in Mississippi were ordered to active duty and sent to Fort Jackson, S.C. Some aviators saw combat in the Korean War.

In early 1953, the Mississippi Aviation program was reorganized at Hawkins Field in Jackson. Mississippi received its first helicopters in 1954.

The Mississippi Army Aviation program was in operation as separate companies from 1959 to 1968. During that time, maintenance support was done in Tupelo and Meridian.

Mississippi's first aviation battalion, the 131st Aviation Battalion, was formed in 1968 and remained in service until 1986 — when it was reorganized as the 131st Aviation Group. In 1987, the 131st was redesignated as the 185th Aviation Group.

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PHOTO BY STEVE GILLESPIE / THE MERIDIAN STAR

**FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER**

Rick Posey helps more than 300 families as a Family Assistance Center supervisor for the Mississippi Army National Guard. Posey, who retired from the Guard in February 2004, was the battalion supply sergeant for the 150th Combat Engineer Battalion for 34 years.

Sandy Bynum is public relations and promotions director at Meridian Community College. She and her husband, Buddy, make their home in Meridian. They have two children, Jarrod, who is grown, and Sarah, a junior at the University of Mississippi.



Bynum

A broadcaster at heart, Sandy has won many industry awards for excellence, including the Silver Microphone Award in 1996 from the National Association of Broadcasters.

Sandy's story is not about a family separated by the U.S. War on Terrorism — or, at least not directly. Even as the United States commits people and resources in the Middle East, there are still military and humanitarian missions elsewhere in the world that need the expertise of active-duty military, Guardsmen and Reservists.

No matter where they serve, they're all part of the structure that supports U.S. efforts to free the Iraqi people and help them establish a democratic government.

This is the story of Sgt. Ginger Regan of the U.S. Army Reserve, a nurse deployed to Kosovo, and her husband, Damen, who is waiting at home in Meridian with their four boys.

**By Sandy Bynum**

special to The Star

... A very small girl climbed into her mother's car after school. She was excited that her day in class had ended and she was going home to freedom ...

... As she threw her books on the seat, her mother said, "I have something very important to tell you." What could it be, the little girl thought. And then her mother said the words, "The National Guard has frozen your daddy." ...

... The little girl's insides went numb. I know that they like my daddy because he is a sergeant, she thought. Why would they freeze him? ...

...

These were my thoughts in December as I interviewed a brave young stepfather. My mind returned to my childhood as Damen Regan told me about trying to explain to his four stepsons why their mother, Ginger Regan, is no longer at home.

Damen was on campus being honored by Meridian Community College's Focus organization — made up of the college's secretaries. Each year, they select a worthy student to help, and to honor, during the Christmas season.

This year's recipient was Regan. As I listened to him talk about his family, I glared at the ceiling and tried to try hold back my tears.

The Regans met and married four years ago while both were employed at the East Mississippi Correctional Facility at Lost Gap, where Ginger was a nurse.

She also was a sergeant in the 1207th U.S. Army Reserve Medical Detachment in Jackson.

The Regans had just begun to build their new life. He started a new job at a drug store and had been accepted into Meridian Community College. She had her nursing career. They were on top of the world. Then their lives were frozen.

"As a member of the Army Reserve, the threat of being called to serve is always in the back of your mind," Damen said.

"Ginger was called to serve in

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